REMARKS:

Claims 9-14 are in the case and presented for consideration.

Applicant affirms his election of the species of claims 1-4 which are now defined in new claims 9-14.

The examiner has indicated that a priority document was not filed. In fact, a certified copy of Italian application MI 2000 U 000 590 which was filed October 18, 2000, along with an English translation thereof was submitted to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and acknowledged as received on February 20, 2002. This was with a document entitled SUBMISSION OF PRIORITY DOCUMENT.

The examiner is requested to verify that the priority document has been matched with this file.

The examiner is correct in observing that the there would have been an anomaly if the filing date of the priority application was in fact October 18, 2001. In fact it was October 18, 2000 and to reestablish correct priority, attached to this Amendment, please find a newly executed Declaration and Power of Attorney with the correct priority claimed.

The examiner has objected to the drawings for not showing the thread like metallic element and reference to this type of structure has been canceled from the claims.

The specification and abstract have also been corrected and provided with headings to satisfy other formal requirements mentioned by the examiner.

Newly presented claims 9-14 are also believed sufficient and correct under 35 U.S.C. §112, first and second paragraphs, and overcome the rejections the examiner had made with regard to claims 1-4.

The examiner has also rejected claims 1-3 as being fully anticipated by U.S. Patent to Maurino.

Maurino discloses a mould for casting structures other than food so that Maurino is not necessarily within the field that the person of ordinary skill in this art would consider relevant for trays used to cook food products.

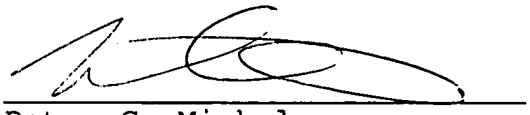
The metal wire insert in the peripheral flange of the Maurino has also provided to help engage the top of the mould to the perimeter of a pot used to cooperate in deforming the mould for extracting a solid cast product made by the mould.

Claim 10 further distinguishes the invention over Maurino by requiring the bottom and side walls of the tray to have substantially constant thickness as clearly shown in all of the drawings of the application and now referred to verbally in the amended specification.

The other feature claimed in one or more of the dependent claims is the flat nature of the outwardly extending wing and the placement of the support element in the lower outer reaches of the ring. These features in fact is in claim 10 and is believed to further distinguish claim 10 over Maurino.

By this Amendment, thus the application and claims are believed to be in condition for allowance and favorable action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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ABSTRACT

A flexible mould made of silicone for confectionery, bread-making or the like, can be used in traditional ovens and microwave ovens. The tray has a stiffened edge preferably of metallic wire dipped in the silicone or of plastic or metallic frame structure, co-stamped or manually inserted into the edge. This improves handling, especially with liquid products, while keeping those flexibility features that make it easy to remove fragile contents from the oven and to deform and flatten it in order to store it in reduced space.

Version with markings [illegible] w changes made
U.S. Appin No. 09/975,230

"FLEXIBLE MOULD FOR CONFECTIONERY, BREAD-MAKING AND SIMILAR, WITH SUPPORT AND STIFFENING ELEMENT OF THE OUTER EDGE"

Field and background of the invention

~~Description~~

This invention relates to a flexible mould made of silicone for confectionery, bread-making or similar, particularly suited to the use both in traditional ovens and microwave ovens, consisting of a tray provided, on the upper side, with an edge which estends outwardly, wherein this edge is equipped with a support and stiffening element, preferably consisting of a metallic wire dippen in the silicone or of platic or metallic frame partially co-stamped at sight, or manually inserted into a corresponding seat provided in the edge.

This feature considerably improves the handling of the tray, especially when it contains very liquid products, keeping unchanged those flexibility features that make easier to take fragile contents out of the oven and to deform and flatten it in order to store it into a reduced space.

As it is known, the moulds for confectionery and bread-making are always made of rigid material, such as for example metal like aluminium, or refractory materials such as ceramic or vitreous material, the latter used in particular in microwave ovens.

The rigid moulds present several disadvantages, from the difficulty to take the product out of the mould without breaking it, to unsuitable dimensions when the trays must be stored.

These disadvantages can be overcome by means of flexible trays ma[illegible]

of fabric of proper fibres coated by a synthetic material such as silicone.

But also these trays present several disadvantages due to the difficulty to duly shape an unstretchable material such as the fabric, to obtain a tray with the required deepness.

Summary of the invention

With the mould of this invention is easier to take the product out of the mould, thanks to the elasicity and the flexibility of the material and it is likewise possible to store the moulds into a reduced space, thanks to the deformability of said moulds.

These known moulds include a duly shaped tray, provided, on the upper side, with an edge, always of silicone, which can extend outwards.

This edge allows to easily grip the tray and take out the product.

The silicone moulds represent an innovative product which can be perfected.

It was noted that the considerable flexibility and elasticity of the material creates some difficulties when there is the need to handle the moulds containing a product, especially if such product is very liquid.

Under the effect of the weight of the product the mould very flexible, tends to deform and if it is lifted by the edge, as usual, there is the risk to split part of the product.

To remove such disadvantage this invention proposes a silicone mould characterised by the fact to provide, near the edge, a support and stiffening element able to give the mould the resistance required to carry the weight of the product without being deformed, keeping the flexibility features which allow to guarantee other advantages listed above.

The mould according to the invention is characterised by the particular

embodiment which improves the handling of the product, increasing its usefulness and practicalness of use.

Brief Description of the Drawings

This invention will be described in details, by way of example without any limitation thereto, with reference to the attached figures, in which:

- figure 1 represents the section of a mould according to the invention;
- figure 2 is the perspective view of the mould of figure 1;
- figures 3 and 4 are perspective views, in section, of further forms of execution of said idea of solution.

Description of the Preferred Embodiments

With reference to the attached figures, 1 indicates, in its whole, a mould according to the invention, essentially consisting of a tray 2 in which the product to be cooked or heated is inserted and that is provided, on the upper side, with an edge 3 essentially consisting of a wing projecting outwards.

Both the tray 2 and the wing 3 are completely made of silicone.

The silicone is a material able to resist to the temperatures of the oven and turned out to be suitable to this aim thanks to its resistance and flexibility features.

Peculiarity of the invention is to provide, near the perimetral area of the edge or wing 3, a support indicated with 4, essentially consisting of a metallic element 5, preferably a metallic wire such as steel the like, dipped into a silicone coating 6.

The fact of providing the metallic wire dipped into the silicone, allows to use the mould even in a microwave oven.

The stiffening wire will have such dimensions as to allow the mould not to bend under the strain of the content, but such as to allow in any case a

SUMMARY

This invention relates to a flexible mould made of silicone for confectionery, bread-making or similar, particularly suited to the use both in traditional ovens and microwave ovens, consisting of a tray provided on the upper side with an edge which estends outwardly, wherein this edge is equipped with a support and stiffening element, preferably consisting of a metallic wire dipped in the silicone or of plastic or metallic frame partially co-stamped at sight, or manually inserted into a corresponding seat provided in the edge.

This feature considerably improves the handling of the tray, especially when it contains very liquid products, keeping unchanged those flexibility features that make easier to take fragile contents out of the oven and to deform and flatten it in order to store it into a reduced space.

Preferrend embodiment of the invention provides for a reinforcing element consisting of a frame (10) (fig. 4) made of rigid or semi-rigid plastic material, which is inserted into a corresponding seat (11) made in the flexible edge (12) of the mould.

Preferably the frame (10) is inserted into a seat provided at the lower surface of the edge.

The outer part (12) of the edge overlaps at least part of the frame (10), which is so held in place.